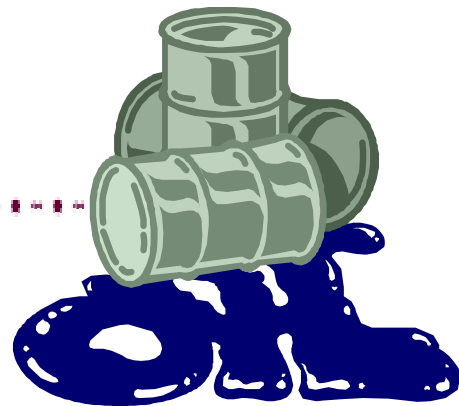


# USED OIL SORBENT INFORMATION SHEET



"Sorberent" - a substance that sorbs (absorbs like a sponge)

"Sorb" - to take up and hold

## What are sorbents made of?

Sorbents can be made from many different materials including clay, polyethylene, recycled paper, wool, cotton, cork, sphagnum peat moss, a combination of the above, or anything that will sponge up liquid oil.

## How are sorbents sold?

Sorbents are sold in a wide variety of shapes and sizes to meet different needs. The most typical sorbents used at New Hampshire municipal recycling centers are socks pads, pillows, rolls or loose sorbent.

**Socks-** A sock is most often laid in the path of an active leak. It conforms to the shape of the floor, soaks up oil and also serves as a dike, holding back the flow of oil.

**Pads-** Pads are usually rectangular in shape. The larger pads may have perforations so they may be torn into a smaller more manageable size. Pads are used to soak up small oil spills. Pads may also be sold pre-cut in circles the size of a drum top. Typically these pads have a two inch hole cut to fit over the bung opening on the drum top.

**Pillows-** Pillows are similar to pads but are thicker to absorb larger volumes of oil.

**Rolls-** Sorbent rolls are similar to pads but normally come in 3 or 4 foot wide rolls. Sorbent rolls may be used like a rug or large mat to catch spills or leaks under equipment, or to collect oil off of shoes or vehicles to prevent tracking it throughout the facility. Rolls may also be cut to line a work bench where filters are drained.

**Loose-** Granular, particulate, or fluff may be sprinkled down in the area of a spill. It usually helps to gently work the sorbent over the area with a broom. When the oil is absorbed the sorbent is collected and properly disposed.

## What type of sorbent should I buy?

There are several matters to consider before buying sorbents. When obtaining quotes from sorbent vendors you will want to share or gather the following information:

1. Do you want to clean up only oil or will you likely need to sorb other materials as well?
2. What is the largest volume of oil that could spill at your facility? Do you collect used oil in 55-gallon drums or a large tank?
3. How do you plan to dispose of your used sorbents? (See below)
4. Can you minimize the amount of sorbent you use by purchasing a re-usable sorbent?

(See Pollution Prevention Tips below)

5. Are any of the vendors' products made of recycled materials?
6. Do you have need for a sorbent that will absorb oil but shed water?
7. Do you need a sorbent material that is designed for use out of doors and won't break down in the sun's ultra-violet rays?
8. Discuss any other special needs you may have with vendors. This is a fast changing market and there is likely a custom product to match your situation.

### **Pollution Prevention Tips -**

Contact DES's Pollution Prevention Program for further information at (603) 271-6460 or 1 (800) 273-9469. To make sure that you are creating the smallest volume of oil waste, consider the following tips:

1. Prevent spills by inspecting collection containers for leaks, protect tanks from traffic, use drip pans, and provide spill containment as a back-up. Keep extra drums, plugs and patching materials on hand.
2. When possible, pick up oil without using sorbents. Consider using a squeegee and dust pan, a wet vacuum, or other means of collecting the oil without creating piles of oil soaked sorbents.
3. Select sorbents that are made from recycled materials if you can find one that meets your needs.
4. Select re-usable sorbents if possible. Some are launderable while others are wringable and can be used again and again.
5. Select sorbents that can be burned for energy recovery.

### **What is the proper way to manage and dispose of sorbents contaminated with used oil?**

There is no single, simple answer to this question. Used oil, once spilled and soaked up with sorbents, can no longer be managed as "used oil for recycle". Whenever possible, remove all the liquid oil that you can for recycle, and then use sorbents to clean the area of residues. The contaminated sorbents must be analyzed to determine whether or not they would exhibit a hazardous waste characteristic. If the used oil that is spilled meets the used oil specifications, and does not contain other contaminants, such as antifreeze or gasoline, then the sorbent could most likely be managed as a solid waste, provided it does not contain any free flowing liquids. If the used oil contaminated sorbent exhibits a hazardous waste characteristic, then it must be delivered to a permitted hazardous waste facility. (Contact the Waste Management Division at (603) 271-6424 for further guidance.)